

1 **In the Specification:**

2
3 Please amend the paragraph on Page 1 lines 17 through 28 as follows:

4
5 Specifically, prior art wrought iron fences are well known in the art. These
6 prior art wrought iron fences have become especially popular in recent years as
7 protective fencing around swimming pools, gardens and serve as security barriers
8 around patios and entryways. The wrought iron fences are formed from rods or
9 tubes of metal which are welded to upper and lower rails to form panels or
10 sections. The panels are either welded between upright metal posts or bolted to the
11 upright posts. The iron fences are sturdy but have a number of problems such as
12 the welded areas are susceptible to rusting even when painted and if galvanized
13 components are used the welding destroys the coating at the welded area that leads
14 to rust. The wrought iron fences are usually assembled and joined together at the
15 job site and ~~required~~ require considerable skill and time on the part of the
16 professional artisans. For this reason, they are relatively expensive.

17
18 On Page 5, please amend the second paragraph as follows:

19
20 The modular picket fence comprises a pair of vertical posts positioned at a
21 suitable distance and adapted to be secured to a suitable support surface. At least
22 one horizontal upper and lower rails extend between and secured to the vertical
23 posts. The horizontal upper rail has a plurality of vertical apertures which are
24 substantially aligned with a plurality of vertical apertures on the horizontal lower
25 rail. A plurality of vertical pickets are respectively inserted through the vertical
26 apertures of the upper rail and through aligned vertical apertures of the lower rail.
27 Each picket has at least two transverse locking slotted apertures for respectively
28 receiving a an H-shaped locking clip to secure the picket to the rail.

1 On Page 10, the third paragraph should be amended as follows:

2
3 Referring to Figure 1, there is shown at 10 a first arrangement of the present
4 invention modular picket fence which comprises a pair of hollow vertical posts or
5 columns 12 and 14 usually spaced apart approximately 6-8 feet and positioned to
6 be secured to a support surface or any other suitable surface, a plurality of hollow
7 vertically disposed pickets or poles 16 which have pointed ends, a pair of spaced
8 apart elongated hollow horizontal upper rails 18 and 20, and an elongated hollow
9 horizontal lower rail 22. In the example shown, the posts 12 and 14 are square
10 shaped tubular but obviously may be of other cross-sectional configuration as
11 desired.

12
13 On Page 10, Line 28, and continuing to Page 11, Lines 1-7, the paragraph should
14 be amended as follows:

15
16 For clarity purposes, only three vertical pickets 16 are illustrated. It will be
17 appreciated that the vertical pickets 16 are not limited to the number of pickets
18 illustrated in Figure 1. In addition, pickets without pointed ends, numbered 16(a)
19 as illustrated in Figures 3, 6(b) and 6(c), are also within the spirit and scope of the
20 present invention. It is emphasized that while the three vertical pickets are
21 depicted, it is also within the spirit and scope of the present invention to have a
22 plurality of vertical pickets which can be used as shown in Figures 6(b)-6(g). It
23 will also be appreciated that at least one elongated horizontal upper rail 18 and at
24 least one elongated horizontal lower rail 22 can be used with the present invention
25 modular fence assembly as shown in Figures 6(a)-6(e). The fence configuration
26 illustrated in Figure 6(e) has been designated as 10(a).

1 Please amend the last paragraph beginning on Page 12 and continuing to Page 13,

2 Lines 1-5 as follows:

3
4 Referring to Figures 3 and 4, there is shown the H-shaped locking clip or
5 ~~means~~40 means 40 that includes a middle section 42 and two leg sections 44 which
6 are formed at opposite ends of the middle section 42. The middle section 42 and
7 the two leg sections 44 form four separate recesses 46 at locations where the
8 middle section 42 and the two leg sections 44 are connected together. The H-
9 shaped locking clip 40 is installed by having one of the leg sections 44 inserted
10 into the locking slotted aperture, where the middle section 42 is concealed within
11 the locking slotted aperture and the two leg sections are outside of the slotted
12 aperture as shown in Figure 3.

13
14 Please amend the second paragraph on Page 15 as follows:

15
16 Referring to Figures 7 and 8, each of the vertical posts 112 and 114 are
17 substantially identical, and to the extent they are, only one will be described in
18 detail in the interest of brevity. A U-shaped metal ~~brackets~~ bracket 120 is attached
19 to the post 112 by screws 122 for removably attaching the proximal end of rail 118
20 by fastening bolts 124 and nuts 126 through the holes 128 on the U-shaped bracket
21 150 and also through the slotted aperture 159 at the proximal end of the rail 118.

22
23 Please amend the third paragraph on Page 15 as follows:

24 Each of the horizontal rails 118 and 120 are substantially identical, and to
25 the ~~extend~~ extent they are, only one will be described in detail in the interest of
26 brevity. The rail 118 has a plurality of non-circular apertures 130, preferably four-
27 sided apertures for receiving the plurality of pickets 116, preferably four-sided
28 pickets.

1 Please amend all of Page 16 as follows:

2
3 The spring clip 140 may be made of metal or other suitable material with
4 a memory to return to its pre-deformed shape after being compressed or squeezed.
5 The spring clip 140 has a generally reversed U or V-shaped configuration with a
6 bent middle portion 142 and two opposite end portions where there are provided
7 outwardly protruding stoppers ~~142~~ 144 which, when the spring clip 140 is inserted
8 into the end portion of picket 116, will extend outwardly through the transverse
9 apertures 134 thereof. Each stopper ~~142~~ 144 has an opening 145 which receives
10 the locking tongue 135 of the picket 116, thereby preventing movement of the
11 spring clip 140 inside the picket 116.

12
13 Each stopper ~~142~~ 144 of the spring clip 140 has a ramp side 147 and a right-
14 angle side 149. As the end portion of the picket 116 (with the spring clip 140
15 inserted) is inserted through the aperture 130 of the rail 118, the ramp side 147 of
16 the spring clip 140 will engage with the edges of the aperture 130 of the rail 118
17 first, causing the spring clip 140 to be compressed, thereby allowing end portion of
18 the picket 116 to be inserted further through the aperture 130.

19
20 Once the ramp side 147 of the spring clip 140 passes the edges of the
21 aperture 130 of the rail 118, the spring clip 140 will expand back, causing the
22 ~~right-angle side 149~~ ramp side 147 of the spring clip 140 to engage and rest upon
23 the interior surface of the hollow rail 118 (as shown in Figure 8).

24
25 Once the stoppers 144 of the spring clip snap in place inside the aperture 130
26 of the rail 118, the end portion of the picket 116 is locked therein and cannot be
27 removed. This mechanism secures the picket 116 to the rail 118.

1 Another variation on the design of the modular fence is shown as 10(b) in
2 Figure 6(a).

3
4 Other similar embodiments of the present invention spring clip are shown in
5 Figures 10(b)-10(e).